



The Eagles' Eyrie

Everyday Heroes – Every Day!

RMR-CO-179 Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol, Colorado Wing (USAF Auxiliary)
Volume I, Issue 3 – 16 OCT 2009

Important Dates:

- 17 OCT – Glider flights, Boulder, all day.
- 17 OCT–24 OCT – Red Ribbon Week (anti-drug campaign).
- 20 OCT – Pueblo Municipal Airport Advisory Committee Meeting, Airport Conference Room, 1430 hrs.
- 23 OCT–25 OCT – Bivouac with Fremont Starfire Cadet Squadron, Royal Gorge campground, beginning 1600 hrs. on 23 OCT.
- 8 NOV – Veteran's Day Parade, Downtown Pueblo. Details TBA.
- 11 NOV – Veteran's Day.

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Eagles Prepared for ES Activities, Lifesaving

September was National Preparedness Month, and members of the Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron demonstrated that they are ready to help their community by training to save a life and showing their readiness for emergency services.

On September 19, squadron members met at the Office of the 10th Judicial District Attorney for an all-day training on First Aid and CPR. The class was taught by a former Pueblo Eagles squadron member, Helen Whitener. Whitener has been a registered nurse for 22 years, and an emergency room nurse for 12 of those years. She has provided CPR and First Aid training to the squadron since she first joined Civil Air Patrol in 1996 with her son, Jalen. Before starting the training, Whitener emphasized to cadets that they should “focus on being the very best you can be, no matter what you do.”

Whitener taught four senior members and ten cadets how to perform adult, child, and infant CPR, using curriculum provided by the American Heart Association. After teaching the required skills and evaluating the techniques of the squadron members, Whitener presented several scenarios to the students to test their readiness. The CPR class also included training in how to use an AED device and how to place a victim in the rescue position.

Cadets and senior members alike were very appreciative of the free training. Cadet Staff Sergeant



Registered Nurse Helen Whitener (left) teaches Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron members how to perform CPR compressions on squadron commander MAJ Stephen Heffler, as 2LT Duane Bissonnette and C/1LT Miranda Abbas observe.
Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown

Stephen Mohan noted that the course taught him “what to do, and what not to do! I thought it was very beneficial, and I was very happy to complete the course.” Other cadets completing the course included C/1LT Miranda Abbas; C/SMSGT Ethan Wilson; C/SSGT Brian Bissonnette, Haelie Compton, and Duc Tran; C/SrA Cassia Brown and Christa Bissonnette; C/A1C Caitlin King; and C/AB Jared Miller.

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“CAP is a family experience,” says RN

Story and photos by 2LT Shad L. Brown

Helen Whitener knows that Civil Air Patrol is a great place for families to spend time together. She joined the Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron in 1996 with her son, Jalen. Whitener watched as Jalen earned an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy and graduated in 2004. Jalen Whitener is now a captain in the United States Air Force, currently assigned to the 34th Fighter Squad-

ron and deployed to Iraq; he will also have some experience with the conflict in Afghanistan in the future. Ms. Whitener says that Civil Air Patrol was a great learning opportunity for her son, especially because of his desire to serve in the Air Force. “CAP taught Jalen basic military discipline, flight, aerodynamics, and testing skills,” said Whitener.

[See Family Experience, Page 2](#)



MAJ Stephen Heffler receiving a simulated Heimlich Maneuver from C/SrA Duc Tran during CPR and First Aid training on 19 SEPT, 2009.
Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown.



Eagle In Profile

Our monthly look at an interesting squadron member... who also gets to pick next month's subject (err, victim)! Squadron beware!

The Eagles' Eyrrie

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Publisher

MAJ Stephen D. Heffler

Editor In Chief

2LT Shad L. Brown

Contributors

2LT Duane Bissonnette

Submit your stories or photos to:

cappao179@gmail.com

Eyrrie: British variant of the word Aerie (Noun):

1. The nest of a bird on a cliff or a mountaintop.
2. A brood of birds of prey.
3. An elevated, often secluded dwelling, structure, or position.

Courtesy of Merriam-Webster.com online dictionary.

This month, the Eagle's Eyrrie profiles **MAJ Stephen Heffler**, our squadron commander.

EE: Major Heffler, how long have you been a member of Civil Air Patrol and of the Pueblo Eagles?

SH: I joined the Pueblo Eagles Cadet Squadron and Civil Air Patrol back on 3 FEB 2003. The squadron had about 25 active Cadets and 10 Senior Members showing up regularly to meetings

EE: Why did you originally join?

SH: My two oldest sons, Ronald and Kyle, kept nagging me about CAP and that I should go to a meeting. Then they started nagging me to join. When I read the regulations that a former enlisted member of the uniformed services did not get credit for prior services for rank purposes, I was a little bit disappointed. But I did join by the eventual persuasion of my wife (1LT Neva Heffler) and my boys.

EE: How did you persuade Lt. Heffler to join?

SH: When my youngest son David joined a couple of years later, my wife also joined as a cadet sponsor member. Little did she know what I had in store for her later in CAP! She did volunteer to be a historian, which she loves to do. She says I tricked her into becoming a senior member, but if you see the gleam in her eyes, she is PROUD to wear the Civil Air Patrol / U.S. Air Force uniform again! For those who did not know, Lt. Heffler was an aircraft mechanic in the U.S. Air Force. That's how we met, and the rest is history!

EE: What jobs have you held in the squadron?

SH: I first held the jobs of personnel officer and testing officer. I had just retired from the Air Force seven years prior to joining CAP and was in personnel as NCOIC for promotions and testing. When Capt. David Ridge took over as squadron commander, he asked me to be his deputy commander and I accepted. A lot of turmoil took place in the squadron from the time I joined until Captain Ridge

took over. Our membership dropped to eight cadets and four senior members. In November, 2004, I assumed command and was given one year to get the squadron going again or we were going to be deactivated.

EE: How long did you serve as squadron commander?

SH: From November, 2004 until April, 2008. After Captain Sakamoto moved to Denver, I was asked by many squadron members to take command again! My wife even said I should do it! So I put my name into the hat with Group 3 Commander Lt. Col. Don Thomas, who recommended me to Wing Commander Col. Edward Phelka, and I was appointed squadron commander for the second time. Even though I got my arm twisted by some senior members, I got the last laugh by telling them they had to step up, that I was not going to do all the work like last time around! They are now realizing what I meant by stepping up, but I have noted they are up to the task!

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Family Experience

Continued from Page 2.

She credits Jalen's time as a Pueblo Eagles cadet squadron commander as being a huge benefit to his application for the Air Force Academy.

Whitener joined along with her son Jalen, thinking that Civil Air Patrol was a great "family experience." She brought her skills as a registered nurse to the

squadron and has given back to Civil Air Patrol and the squadron by teaching CPR and First Aid classes every year to new groups of cadets and senior members.

The Pueblo Eagles are definitely a family affair, with two current families serving as senior members and cadets, and a third with three senior members.



RN Helen Whitener shows Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron members the tools of the first aid trade during emergency services training on 19 SEPT 2009.
Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown.

Eagles Demonstrate Preparedness

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Senior members participating in the training included Major Stephen Heffler, Captain Alix Brockman, and Second Lieutenants Duane Bissonnette and Shad Brown.

Meanwhile, the training that squadron members have been doing was put to the test during National Preparedness Month.

On September 14, many Pueblo Eagles were woken up in the predawn hours by pages from Colorado Wing, seeking aircrews and ground teams to search for two missing hikers near Buffalo Peak in the Pike National Forest, on the Lake County / Jefferson County line. While the CAP ground teams were ultimately not used by the incident commander for the Jefferson County Search and Rescue Team, squadron commander Major Stephen Heffler commended all squadron members for responding to his phone calls at an early hour, and indicated that the Eagles were ready for their first mission in almost a year.

The hikers, one of whom was a serviceman stationed at Fort Carson, ultimately were located about 15 miles away from their vehicle when they walked into a small town at 1700 hours.



Squadron members a little worse for the wear after CPR and First Aid training. From left to right: MAJ Stephen Heffler, C/SSgt Duc Tran, C/1LT Miranda Abbas, C/SSgt Stephen Mohan, C/SMSgt Ethan Wilson, C/SSgt Brian Bissonnette, C/AB Jared Miller, C/A1C Caitlyn King. Front Row: C/SrA Christa Bissonnette, C/SSgt Haelie Compton, and C/SrA Cassia Brown.

Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown

Major Heffler, Captain Mark Sutton, Captain Robert Sakamoto, and cadets Duc Tran and Ethan Wilson were noted for responding to the alert and being prepared to assist Jefferson County.

Group 3 Commander Lieutenant Colonel Don Thomas also commended the Eagles ground team, sending a "Well done!" e-mail to squadron members on September 14.

Squadron members will get the chance to practice some cold-weather search and rescue skills in conjunction with the Fremont Starfire Cadet squadron on October 23 to 25, as the squadrons will work together on a weekend bivouac training exercise west of Canon City at the Royal Gorge campground.

Story by 2LT Shad L. Brown



Halloween Safety Tips

By 2LT Duane Bissonnette, Safety Officer

Halloween is an exciting time of year, which sometimes makes both children and adults forget to be careful. Here are a few tips to help you have a great time while avoiding some common Halloween dangers:

1. Make sure your costume is safe. Choose flame resistant costumes when possible. Avoid masks, or make sure your mask

- has large enough eye holes for good peripheral vision. Make sure any props are smooth and flexible, and are not too realistic. If the costume is not bright and/or reflective, consider adding reflective tape. Make sure your shoes fit well and your costumes are short enough to avoid tripping.

2. Make sure to travel in a group, with each person having a flashlight with fresh batteries. Obey all traffic laws, crossing

- streets at recognized intersections, and walking on sidewalks or on the furthest edge of the right of way. Avoid crossing yards or going down alleys. Don't run!

3. Trick or treat in well known neighborhoods, preferably well lit, and only at homes with lights on. Never enter someone's home for a treat or accept unwrapped foods or beverages.

4. Enjoy Halloween!



C/SSgt Duc Tran demonstrates correct CPR technique to squadron members.
Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown

"Focus on being the very best you can be, no matter what you do."

Registered Nurse Helen Whitener, giving advise to squadron members on the way to make the most of their Civil Air Patrol experience, or any other lifetime endeavor.



C/SSgt Haelie Compton practices her CPR skills during Pueblo Eagles Composite Squadron CPR and First Aid training on 19 SEPT 2009.
Photo by 2LT Shad Brown

Eagle News... Briefly!

Recent Promotions:



Second Lieutenants: Kelly Bosley, promoted at squadron meeting on 10 SEPT, and Shad Brown, promoted on 1 OCT. 2LT Bosley has been hard at work as the new squadron Emergency Services Officer, while 2LT Brown is the squadron Public Affairs Officer, Administration Officer, and Information Technologies / Web Security Officer and Webmaster. Keep up the outstanding work, gentlemen!



Cadet First Lieutenant Miranda Abbas, promoted at squadron meeting on 3 SEPT. C/1LT Abbas was featured in the last issue of the Eagle's Eyrie and is marching along the path to Spaatz. Diamonds are a girl's best friend, Cadet Commander!



Cadet Staff Sergeants: Haelie Compton, Steven Mohan, and Duc Tran, promoted on 1 OCT. Both cadets have completed their Phase I requirements and earned the Wright Brothers award. C/SSgt Compton is the squadron recruiting NCO in charge and serves as a flight leader, while C/SSgt Mohan is in the aerospace education NCO in charge, and C/SSgt Tran is the emergency services NCO in charge. Keep up the outstanding work, Sergeants!

New members:

Welcome to our newest squadron members, Cadets Michael Sanders and Jared Miller.

Welcome back to C/Amn Brandon Minich, who is returning to the Pueblo Eagles after a brief hiatus. C/Amn Minich originally joined CAP in January of 2008.

Mission Scanner Training:

Mission Scanner training will shift to weekends to facilitate completion. Further information will be announced on the squadron website. Pikes Peak Senior Squadron members have offered to get our scanners into the air as soon as we are ready! Thanks, PPSS!



C/1LT Miranda Abbas salutes squadron commander MAJ Stephen Heffler after receiving her promotion on 3 SEPT 2009.

Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown



C/SSgt Stephen Mohan practices proper Heimlich maneuver techniques on C/AB Jared Miller.

Photo by 2LT Shad L. Brown

Eagle in Profile—Major Heffler

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EE: What accomplishment are you most proud of during either tour of duty as squadron commander?

SH: Bringing the squadron back from near-deactivation to a high of almost 35 total members. Also, training our squadron to be ground team emergency services qualified for the first time in many years, and our ground team's role in rescuing Evan Thompson (a lost eight year old boy) north of Canon City. You can read about it in the August–September 2006 issue of CAP Volunteer (ed. Note: available online at www.gocivilairpatrol.com).

EE: What do you do when you are not teaching cadets, fixing computers, and leading ground teams?

SH: I proudly work for the Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at the Colorado Springs Municipal Airport as a Supervisory Transportation Security

Officer. I am responsible for eleven officers and to ensure the safety of the transportation system and the public. I was one of the first TSA Officers hired and began work for TSA in March, 2002.

EE: Tell us about your service on the Pueblo Veterans Ritual Team.

SH: We perform at funerals for veterans in Southern Colorado, as well as the Wreaths Across America program. I perform as part of the Honor Guard with an M-1 rifle during the 21-gun salute.

EE: What would our cadets be surprised to know about you?

SH: I started learning leadership skills at age 13 as a Little League baseball umpire (and continued to be a baseball umpire for 25 years, including at the NCAA level). I was also a high school and college football referee!

EE: How should cadets recruit their parents to join the squadron? What's the best piece of advice you can give them?

SH: Cadets are good at nagging. My boys kept nagging me to come to meetings and eventually I joined. Parents might as well come in to the meetings instead of sitting in their car or spending money at a local store. In fact, they may enjoy it! The program is getting bigger every week! Cadets can also get their friends to come to meetings too by inviting (nagging).

EE: Finally, which cadet should be featured in next month's issue of the Eagle's Eyrie?

SH: Cadet Staff Sergeant Duc Q. Tran. He just gave me some more work to do – two nominations to a U.S. Service Academy! Good luck, C/SSgt Tran!

